



Dear Resident:

Aside from being a nuisance, mosquitoes in Monroe County now pose a public health threat. Discovered here in the summer of 2000, West Nile virus is an illness that is most threatening to people over the age of 50 and anyone with a chronic illness. It requires actions by both individuals and government officials to safeguard you and your family.

Fortunately, the risk of serious illness from West Nile virus is small, but it is very important to know how you can minimize the risk to you and your family. This brochure will help you.

Sincerely,

Jack Doyle
County Executive

WEST NILE VIRUS

West Nile virus (WNV) is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. Most people experience no symptoms or will have mild flu-like symptoms such as a slight fever, headache or body aches. In the most serious cases, infection can result in encephalitis, which is an inflammation of the brain. Less than 1% of people infected with WNV will have symptoms serious enough to require hospitalization.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

People over the age of 50, and persons with chronic illness are at highest risk of serious illness from WNV. State and federal health officials do not consider children to be at a higher risk for WNV. While there is no specific treatment or vaccine for WNV, the vast majority of people fully recover and infection is rarely fatal.

MOSQUITOES

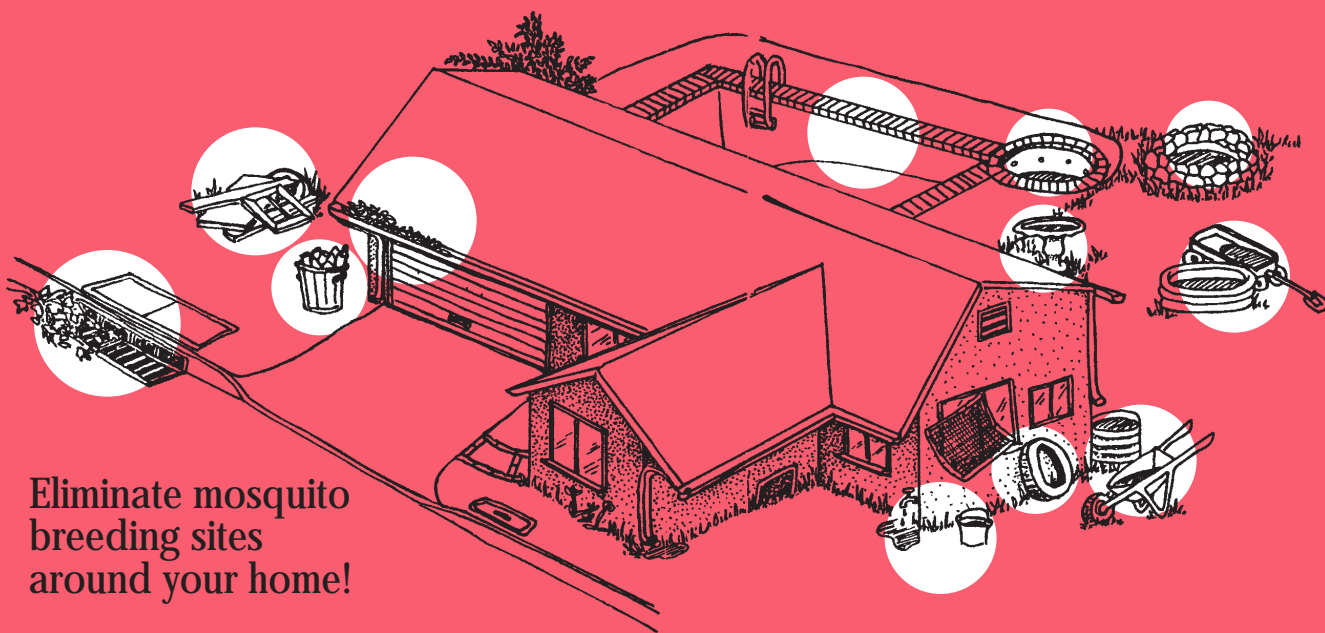
The mosquitoes that most often carry West Nile virus are found throughout Monroe County and New York State. Mosquitoes live and breed in stagnant water, weeds, tall grass and shrubbery and don't travel very far from where they breed. Many mosquitoes breed in containers that hold water, such as flowerpots, birdbaths and discarded tires.

PROTECT YOUR HOME

Mosquitoes may enter homes through unscreened windows, doors, or broken screens. To reduce the mosquito population in residential neighborhoods, it is very important for homeowners to drain all areas of standing water where mosquitoes lay their eggs.

To reduce standing water:

Dispose of old tires and empty plastic containers, children's pools, birdbaths,



wheelbarrows, pool covers and any other item that collects water on your property.

Cover garbage cans and dumpsters.

Clean clogged gutters.

Use topsoil to fill low areas on your property that hold water after heavy rain.

Consider use of larvicide in small water holding containers that cannot easily be drained (larvicides, also called Mosquito Dunks, are available in home and garden stores).

PROTECT YOURSELF

To reduce your risk of mosquito bites:

Minimize outdoor activities between dusk and dawn.

Wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are more active.

Use insect repellent with DEET.

Do NOT apply DEET directly to children. Apply to your own hands and then put it on a child. Avoid the child's face and hands.

For children, use insect repellents containing no more than 10% DEET.

For adults, use insect repellents containing no more than 30% DEET.

Wash all treated skin and clothing after returning indoors.

Read all instructions on the label before applying insect repellent.

REPORTING DEAD CROWS

Dead crows serve as a warning sign that WNV may be present in our county. Dead crows should be reported to the Monroe County Health Department. It is not necessary to report bird species other than crows. The information will be recorded to track the number of crows dying in a particular geographic area. Although the reports of all crows are important, only a small number will be tested this year.

MONROE COUNTY ACTION PLAN

Monroe County officials continue to work very closely with state and federal health officials to provide the greatest protection from WNV for our residents. In addition to stressing the various preventive measures that residents can take and tracking reports of dead crows, the Monroe County Health Department is collecting and testing adult mosquitoes and mosquito larvae from various locations throughout the county. This information enables us to identify the populations of various species present and to determine if they are carrying WNV. Additionally, we are in close contact with the medical community to assure that if an outbreak of WNV occurs, it will be detected very quickly so that protective actions can be taken. In an effort to reduce mosquito populations, larvicide will be used in areas of Monroe County that have the highest concentrations of older people. Larvicide kills the larva before it becomes an adult mosquito.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call the Monroe County Health Department Information Line at 234-9600 or visit our Web site: www.MonroeCounty.gov.

Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus *Protect Yourself*



Jack Doyle
County Executive

Andrew S. Doniger, M.D.
Health Director